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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE SITUATION IN YEMEN

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 931 (1994) of 29 June 1994, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy to continue talks under their auspices with all concerned, with a view to implementing a durable cease-fire and to the possible establishment of a mechanism acceptable to both sides, preferably involving countries of the region, to monitor, encourage respect for, help to prevent violations of the cease-fire and to report to the Secretary-General.

II. CEASE-FIRE MONITORING MECHANISM

2. Following the discussions I held separately with Mr. Haidar Abu Bakr Al-Attas, representing the South, and Dr. Abdul-Karim Al-Iryani, Minister of Development and Planning in the Government of the Republic of Yemen, on 24 June 1994, my Special Envoy arranged a face-to-face meeting between the two Yemeni leaders on 28 June. He subsequently had a series of joint meetings with both of them with a view to reaching an agreement on a cease-fire and to the possible establishment of a mechanism to sustain it.

3. In accordance with Security Council resolutions 924 (1994) of 1 June 1994 and 931 (1994) and on the basis of the cease-fire agreement signed in Moscow on 30 June 1994 (S/1994/778, annex), the discussions between the two sides led to a broad, tentative agreement on the establishment of a mechanism to supervise the cease-fire.

4. Acting on the basis of these discussions, my Special Envoy met with the Ambassadors of the countries of the region that the two parties had suggested as possible providers of observers and asked them if they could confirm in principle their countries' readiness to participate in the above-mentioned mechanism. The reaction of most of these countries was positive, but many expressed concern that the cease-fire was still not being observed on the ground.

5. Regarding the question of funding for the mechanism, my Special Envoy, as a preparatory step, established contact with interested Governments in the region who informed him of their willingness to contribute to a special fund to be established for this purpose, provided a cease-fire was effective.

III. CEASE-FIRE

6. It is obvious that discussions between the two Yemeni sides, or with countries from the region, on the question of establishing a mechanism and funding it could not go much further unless both parties demonstrated in a concrete manner the political will actually to implement the cease-fire and cooperated to make it effective.

7. On eight occasions, dates and hours were agreed for the cease-fire to enter into force. On eight occasions, the cease-fire did not hold for more than a few hours. Indeed, on some occasions, the designated time came and went, and the fighting did not even stop momentarily.

8. As one party was clearly much stronger than the other, it became more and more evident that a military solution was being sought and that resolutions 924 (1994) and 931 (1994) were being ignored despite repeated assurances that both sides accepted them and were willing to implement them.

9. Early in July, fighting intensified and events on the ground overtook diplomatic efforts in New York and elsewhere to contain the crisis. On 6 July, after fierce battles, particularly in and around Aden, troops loyal to the Sana'a Government seized control of the main cities in the South. Although some reports have spoken of pockets of resistance and of some fighting continuing here and there, it seems that military activities have now subsided.

IV. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

10. As fighting continued, the humanitarian situation in Aden went from bad to worse. I mentioned in my previous report (S/1994/764) that water was becoming scarce. Conditions subsequently became extremely serious: neither running water nor equipment to draw water out of the city's some 40 wells was available.

11. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), working through its delegates in Sana'a and Aden, arranged for two shiploads of urgent aid to be delivered, including water pumps and generators. In their usual dedicated and selfless manner, Red Cross employees in Aden worked around the clock to provide some water to the inhabitants of the city. They pleaded for a cease-fire to be arranged on purely humanitarian grounds to repair the water station. Despite firm commitments made to the United Nations and to ICRC, fighting went on unabated. It became clear that repairing the main water station at Bir-Nasser would take a long time and that the only solution for the short term would be to transport water by truck. ICRC once again asked for a truce to allow them to bring in a convoy of 18 trucks to distribute water to certain parts of the city. Again, firm promises were made but were not kept.

12. I would like to take this opportunity to express to ICRC the United Nations appreciation for the admirable work it has done and continues to do under adverse conditions in Yemen. I would like also to recognize the dedicated service performed by non-governmental organizations and express my sympathy for the two medical officers of Médecins Sans Frontières who were wounded in Aden last week.

13. The Department for Humanitarian Affairs has been following the situation very closely in cooperation with the Special Envoy. As I indicated in my previous report (S/1994/764), a first evaluation was conducted early in June. This evaluation is being updated and it is expected that a new inter-agency mission will visit Yemen, in particular Aden and the other zones affected by the war, in the coming few days. Urgent aid is already being rushed from existing stocks in the area, particularly in Djibouti. Other organizations as well as some member countries are also actively preparing to contribute to relief efforts.

14. On 10 July 1994, the Assistant Secretary-General for Military Affairs of the Arab League, who was visiting Yemen, went to Aden with United Nations Resident Coordinator Dr. Aouni Al-Ani and representatives of other agencies. Eleven tons of medicaments and children's food were to be distributed by the United Nations in the last two or three days.

V. OBSERVATIONS

15. On 7 July 1994, I received Dr. Abdul-Karim Al-Iryani, Minister of Development and Planning in the Government of the Republic of Yemen. He delivered a letter from the Acting Prime Minister, Dr. Mohammed Said Al-Attar, in which the authorities in Sana'a committed themselves to an immediate cessation of all military activities and to the following decisions:

(a) Comprehensive amnesty;

(b) Compensation to all citizens who lost property as a result of the "rebellion" as well as to families of war victims;

(c) Continuation of respect for democracy, political pluralism, freedom of speech and of the press, and human rights;

(d) Determination to continue national dialogue in the framework of constitutional legitimacy and reaffirmation of commitment to the provisions of the "compact and agreement document" as a basis for building a modern Yemeni State;

(e) Promotion of close cooperation with the States in the region on the basis of the principles of mutual respect, good neighbourly relations and non-intervention in internal affairs in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, and development of close cooperation with its neighbours in the service of peace, stability and prosperity for the people of the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf.

16. On 8 July, President Ali Abdallah Saleh of the Republic of Yemen called me on the telephone. In both my conversation with him and my meeting with Dr. Al-Iryani, I expressed the hope that the commitments made by the Government in Sana'a would soon be translated into action. I also pointed out that the cessation of military activities would not, by itself, end the crisis in Yemen; reconciliation and political dialogue between the parties were urgently needed. I informed Mr. Haidar Abu Bakr Al-Attas and Mr. Abdallah Al-Asnag of my discussion with Dr. Al-Iryani and reassured them that the United Nations would be ready to help in any way it could, should the two sides so desire. To all my Yemeni interlocutors, I made it clear that I would be sending a report to the Security Council in conformity with resolution 931 (1994).

17. On 8 July, I received Mr. Al-Attas and Mr. Al-Asnag, who, on behalf of their side, delivered to me a letter in which they pointed out that hostile actions were still being conducted by the other side and stressed the necessity:

(a) To implement Security Council resolutions 924 (1994) and 931 (1994) and effectively cease all military activities;

(b) To liberate all prisoners and end all actions aimed at killing, arresting and torturing people, which are continuing in an indiscriminate manner;

(c) To ensure respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and allow concerned organizations to investigate violations and misconduct by the Northern forces;

(d) To start negotiations between the two sides under the auspices of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

18. On 9 July, Dr. Al-Iryani and Ambassador Abdallah Saleh Al-Ashtal, Permanent Representative, of Yemen to the United Nations, met with Mr. Al-Attas and Mr. Al-Asnag once again in the presence of my Special Envoy. The two sides said they would keep in contact through him.

19. The news from Yemen is that fighting is now virtually over in all parts of the country. However, disturbing reports have been dispatched by newspaper correspondents flown to Aden from Sana'a. Looting and lawlessness as well as fires have affected much property, mostly publicly owned. Private property, including homes of Southern leaders, have also been targeted. These acts have been deplored by government leaders in Sana'a. However, firm action is urgently needed to put an end to them. The Special Envoy has been informed by the authorities in Sana'a that the Army will soon be withdrawn from the Governorate of Aden.

20. The phase of an all-out war in the Yemeni crisis seems to have come to an end. It is not known how many people lost their lives or were wounded, but it is known that there were too many and I can only express regret and sympathy to the families of the victims and to all those whose homes have been destroyed, to those who were forced to run for their lives far from their homes and to those whose property was destroyed or damaged.

21. Severe damage was also inflicted upon the infrastructure of this developing country. Water systems, power stations, oil refineries, airports and communication centres were totally or partially destroyed throughout the country. Much time and not readily available resources will be needed to repair the damage.

22. The people of Yemen expect the international community, through international and regional organizations as well as through bilateral cooperation, to extend a helping hand to them as they embark on reconstruction. The international community for its part expects the Yemeni leaders to address seriously and urgently the problems that lie at the root of their crisis and to ensure a lasting solution and credible stability.

23. The end of fighting is certainly a welcome development, but the people of Yemen and their leaders know better than anyone that this is not, by itself, the lasting solution that is needed. That solution will be achieved only through political dialogue between the two sides, as resolutions 924 (1994) and 931 (1994) urgently requested.

24. In the positions publicly proclaimed by the two parties and communicated by them to the United Nations there is enough common ground to permit such a dialogue to be initiated in a responsible and dignified manner and in a spirit of mutual respect. The Secretary-General remains ready to use his good offices and to extend all possible help and cooperation as soon as the two parties agree to his playing this role.